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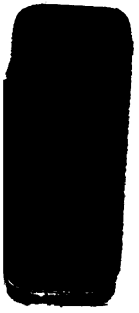

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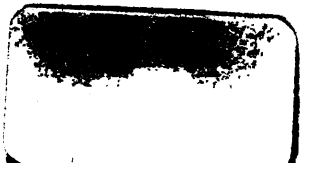

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THE TESTIMONY OF REASON

THE TESTIMONY OF REASON

BY

SAMUEL L. PHILLIPS,

A. B. (PRINCETON).

Zion's Herald:

The author writes mainly for students of science who have rejected the doctrines of the orthodox churches. He seeks to establish the probability of the most important truths of Christianity by purely rational considerations from facts, so that doubters may be led to recognize the real strength of the Christian position, and yield themselves to the glorifying faith in the Saviour of mankind. It is a most excellent aim.

Courier-Journal, Louisville:

An argument founded upon known facts and known laws for the Christian religion. It is written with profound earnestness and clear logic. Its elevated and inspiring sentiments should have a wide circulation.

The Sunny South, Atlanta, Ga.:

The object of the author is sensibly stated and is to meet the negatives of scientific agnostics with facts out of their own data which prove their knownothingisms palpably inconsistent. Upon the salient propositions of theology pure and simple Mr. Phillips presents fairly the attitude of those who doubt, deny, or "don't know" what Christians in common believe. He examines the grounds of their unbelief, or faith inertia, and answers them with the logic of facts and theories that they profess to be scientifically true and tenable.

A reading of "The Testimony of Reason" will enforce the conclusion that what is popularly known as "scientific doubt" in the field of theological knowledge is no more than self-imposed ignorance by the refusal of knowledge.

* * * Expert, cogent and convincing to those who have enough of both theological and scientific information to follow his arguments.

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Believers in the Christian religion will find much to gratify and satisfy them in this admirable little book.

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This is a book which is good to read and profitable to remember. In it the writer endeavors to prove the truth of the Bible in its entirety, and argues scientists, atheists, agnostics and pantheists on their own grounds. His quiet earnestness is convincing and his knowledge is not limited to the usual refutations of his opponents' points. He advances new thoughts from an optimistic view point and stands firm for the "gorifying and ennobling" Christian faith. His principles of belief are clearly and concisely presented and the work is full of cheer and encouragement.

The Buffalo Courier; Gazette, Montreal, Canada.:

This volume seeks to combat with "arguments founded upon known facts and known laws" the representations of agnostics and scientists who dispute the commonly accepted Christian religion. Rather a clever defence of Christianity from a somewhat original standpoint.

Courant, Hartford, Conn.; Baltimore American:

The purpose of "The Testimony of Reason," by Samuel L. Phillips, cannot be too highly commended as an effort to meet the objectors to religous truths on the grounds of fair deduction and unprejudiced debate. Mr. Phillips believes that these opponents can be "made to see that many of the important truths of Christianity can be established to a high degree of probability by purely rational considerations from facts in whose truth they firmly believe" and that thus they may be brought into a more receptive frame of mind for further argument.

Oregonian, Portland, Ore.:

The book will doubtless prove a comfort to many that have been disquieted by vague rumors of attacks on religion by science.

Savannah Morning News:

An interesting and valuable little book.

Times-Democrat, New Orleans, La.:

Mr. Phillips' little treatise upon the testimony of reason when applied to the principles of revealed religion is the outcome of a conviction that more attention should be given by the representatives of the Christian Church to arguments founded upon known facts and known laws; that the scientist and agnostic should be approached upon their own battle-ground, their weapons seized and the fight waged with arguments from nature against arguments from nature. He has therefore examined briefly the position taken by the atheist, the agnostic and the pantheist, and shown why, in his opinion, they are, one and all, untenable. Mr. Phillips' arguments * * * are well put, and they have never, as he says, been satisfactorily answered.

Buffalo Sunday News:

The argument * * * is well carried forward and the evidences in human consciousness in verification of the claims of faith are skillfully marshaled.

The Presbyterian:

In the fulfillment of its purpose it will doubtless prove helpful to many a struggling soul.

The Times, Pittsburg, Pa.:

The author believes truth and nature to be one and harmonious, and that Christianity is truth. He has advanced some strong arguments in support of his faith.

CLOTH, pp. 116, Price, 25 cents.

THE PHILLIPS COMPANY,

330 John Marshall Place, Washington, D. C.

1904.

THE TESTIMONY OF REASON

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BY

SAMUEL L. PHILLIPS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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SAMUEL L. PHILLIPS

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PREFACE

From the middle of the last century to the present time a great wave of unbelief in the principles of revealed religion has been passing over the minds of some of the most learned men.

The dicta of the Scriptures have been ignored by them and nothing believed except it be agreeable to natural reason. What are supposed to be the teachings of science have largely displaced faith.

Those who have rejected the doctrines of orthodox Christian churches are not to be regarded with either indifference or pity. No man lives who is a greater lover of truth than the scientist. The pursuit of science is the pursuit of truth, and the student of science makes truth his deity. He believes whatever facts teach; he follows blindly, joyfully where his reason leads.

If the student of divinity can show the student of science wherein he is wrong, what important premise in his syllogism is false, or has been omitted, none will embrace the new demonstration with more delight and enthusiasm than the latter. But the citation of mir-

acles will have no influence on his mind, for he sees no variableness in the laws of nature he has been studying; the assertions of prophets and apostles, of confessors and priests will not convince him he has erred, when his reason assures him their assertions are contrary to his experiences. He believes truth and nature to be one and harmonious.

It would seem, therefore, more attention should be given by the representatives of the Christian church to arguments founded upon known facts and known laws; that the scientist and agnostic should be approached on their own battle ground, their weapons seized and the fight waged with arguments from nature against arguments from nature, and after the contemners of revealed religion have been made to see, as I believe they can be, that many of the important truths of Christianity can be established to a high degree of probability by purely rational considerations from facts, in whose truth they firmly believe, then they will be in a much more receptive state of mind to acknowledge that, after all, they have been surprised at the confirmatory human arguments brought forth; that much more truth resides in the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ than they had supposed; that there being so much of probable truth in it all, it is only a fair argument the whole of it may be truthful, until finally, in the impotency of their own reasoning, in the scien-

tific recognition that there is so much in nature beyond the understanding—whole worlds beyond physics—they will yield themselves entirely to the ennobling, the glorifying faith in the Saviour of Mankind.

To accomplish something in this line, which has been the experience of the writer, is the aim of this book.

Washington, D. C.,

THE TESTIMONY OF REASON

NATURE OF GOD

One of the fundamental criteria for human judgment is the estimation of a being's faculties by his works. When we hear a distant bark we affirm without seeing that the animal making the noise is of the dog species; when we find a nest hidden among the branches of a tree we conclude some bird has built it; when we behold a ship sailing on the water we know man has fashioned it. This comparative method of reasoning is so universal, animals act on it as well as men, and so essential is it that deprived of this process of arriving at knowledge, mankind would never have attained to even the present mental status of the brute world.

Accordingly, when we look out on nature and find that a square described on the hypothenuse of every right angle triangle is equivalent to the sum of the squares described on the other two sides; that one of the functions of logarithms is that a high power of a number may be obtained by the multiplication of two numbers,

thus shortening to a line and the work to a minute what would probably take an expert arithmatician a long time to solve, and covering many pages with figures; that in electricity the current is always equal to the electromotive force divided by the resistance; that any two forces may be resolved into a single force which will be their diagonal; that in chemistry when one atom of nitrogen combines with three atoms of oxygen there invariably results nitric acid, and so on to probably a billion instances, we are forced to conclude that the Being who ordained these things should be so—for it is inconceivable the triangle or nitrogen, etc., should have made its own laws—of necessity was a geometer, a mathematician, an electrician, a civil engineer and a chemist.

But to be endowed with such capacities and knowledge the creator of such things must have been possessed of mental faculties similar in character to those of man, for the latter has discovered, formulated, and applied them by the exercise of his mental faculties.

If the above facts be correct and the conclusion drawn from them be legitimate, it follows that Almighty God must be, in the broad sense of the term, a Being possessing intellectuality, of which man's own intellectuality is, in some respects, a feeble likeness.

ARGUMENT OF ANALOGY

A celebrated argument of Analogy was in effect, if one should visit an uninhabited island and in traversing it find a watch for keeping time, such individual would conclude, on examining its parts and noticing their dependence one on the other and all tending to produce a common result, that some intelligent being had made the watch. It next cited the innumerable evidences of design in vegetables, animals, and mankind, and affirmed that all of these things showed a far more complex and wonderful mechanism than the watch, and by analogy they must have been made by an intelligent Creator.

This argument was not seriously disputed when promulgated, but of late years it has been ignored by many scientists because they believe Darwin and his followers have shown it to be probable that some species of vegetables and animals have originated either by artificial or natural selection, or unconsciously by adaptation to their environment.

Giving the contention of the evolutionists the utmost force its believers claim, it does not invalidate or even touch the conclusions drawn

from, for example, the laws of electricity, which have existed from the original fiat, laws in this one division of science so numerous, so precise, so unvarying, so complex many of them can be solved only by the calculus, but so certain and true that although pages after pages of the most refined mathematical processes are required to be filled for their solution, there are never any inconsistencies between the electrical phenomena and any of the intermediate or final equations which represent them.

In such instances as electricity, as gravitation, as chemistry there has been admittedly no evolution. The qualities of matter, and the laws governing the sciences today were made in the beginning. Man with his expanding intellect has discovered many of them, possibly he may be simply on the threshold of the temple of knowledge. These laws are more complex than the mechanism of the watch, and it is inconceivable for them to have been the work of chance. Chance is a synonym of disorder, of change.

The laws of nature are ever certain, and wonderfully designed to produce an harmonious creation. The Creator who conceived and brought them into being must have exercised a knowledge, a foresight, an intellectuality beyond thought, and though animals and men may be admitted to have been evolved from lower orders, evolution has had no part in

bringing the laws of nature into existence. They were perfect in the beginning and have never changed. They were made by a single fiat of the Almighty.

DARWINISM

It may be admitted that it is probable species originated from a common ancestor by virtue of a law of the survival of the fittest to live, and the inheritance by its progeny of desirable acquired characteristics.

But this law is one of God's laws, and while the aforegoing analogy in pointing to the present mechanism of the eye, or ear, or heart as proof of the direct and immediate handiwork of an intelligent Creator, in the sense of a watch being the work of an intelligent man, is probably not perfect, yet if it was said the laws of evolution which have wrought these changes and improvements were the work of an intelligent Creator, the conclusion would be irrefutable.

Granting the assertions of the most extreme evolutionists, it is no impeachment of the power and intelligence of God to admit all vertebrates had a common ancestor in the very remote past, rather it is an evidence of His power to be able to impress on all vegetable and animal life this ability to develop into differences and higher beings and evolve the harmonious and beautiful world we see before us.

There is nothing, therefore, in evolution antagonistic to the creation of nature by the all-wise and powerful God in whom we believe. The workman who produces screws by means of machinery he has constructed and put in operation is as much a maker of such screws as he who fashions them severally with his own hands.

ATHEISM

The scientist who refuses to believe in an intelligent God as the Creator of the universe because He is not manifest to his physical senses, but in his efforts to account for all the apparent and wonderful evidences of design which surround him affirms that nature was self-created and is self-existent, is compelled to defend successfully these propositions:

1. That solids, liquids and gases could have established the innumerable and various laws under which they act.

2. That matter had not only the intelligence to ordain these laws, but to create them of such complexity as to be solvable in many cases only by the higher mathematics.

3. That substances which exhibit neither memory, nor intelligence, nor life can invariably act in accordance with such laws.

4. That such uniformity of action does not presuppose some outward influence impressed upon matter, or some quality of motion attached by creative power to its constituents, for if such uniformity of conduct does involve any extraneous influence, then some Thing superior to matter is required in the organization of

nature, and atheism must be abandoned for theism.

5. Inasmuch as there is in all nature only one power capable of formulating and solving its laws mathematically, namely, the intelligence of man, it is not a persuasive inference that the Author of such laws must have possessed the mental faculties man possesses; because it is inconceivable to suppose a Being is able to create except in a few isolated instances, what he does not understand.

In view of these propositions addressed to the atheist, and because no atheist has ever answered either of them, the existence of an intelligent and all powerful Supreme Being is rendered highly probable.

AGNOSTICISM

The agnostic scientist declares he has no knowledge of God on which to found even a reasonable hypothesis of His nature.

The mistake of the agnostic is he demands conclusive evidence of a fact which he does not require, and cannot obtain, on any other subject.

Man has no capacity beyond the mere act of moving things. His whole physical existence is spent in changing the position of particles of matter and placing them in new relations to one another. When one grasps fully the narrow limit of his powers, the vaunted self-appreciation of his capacity dwindles to small proportions.

Nor is man's knowledge of matter of any more moment than his power over it. The learned chemist does not know, for example, why the union of one atom of mercury and two of chlorine invariably results in corrosive sublimate, and of two atoms of mercury and two of chlorine forms calomel. The biologist, though surrounded by life and growth on every side, does not understand why some cells divide and others multiply from within, or why growth

takes place at all. The psychologist is equally at a loss to comprehend the underlying principles of his science and to tell us how the mind performs the functions of memory, or even why the impress of a picture on the retina gives sight to animals.

And yet no scientist doubts these phenomena. He knows there is something within the mercury, within the living cell, within the mind, some occult power, some inherent quality impressed upon them by a force outside of the atoms, beyond his own power, beyond his understanding, that makes each substance act invariably in a certain manner—not at haphazard—but with such obedience to definite law that the law itself, in some cases, may be formulated and subjected to mathematical analysis and conclusions reached which are yet beyond verification by experiment. In a word, the agnostic demands full knowledge of the Creator, convincing proof of His essence, of His power, of His methods of creation, when he has not the ability to understand the least of His creations.

In matters relating to his special field of investigation the agnostic scientist is not so exacting as when he approaches the subject of the Deity. No class of men are more prone to speculation than such investigators. Their first effort after a few experiments is to form a generalization, and hypothesis, under which they group the facts ascertained and from thence

deduce the past and future order of events; and each one believes most firmly in his own particular theory, a belief as strong as any Christian experiences when he thinks of his God.

In the science, for example, of magnetism, some, in order to account for the phenomena, affirm that an ether permeates all matter, even the densest steel; others reject this view and assert that motion is indestructible and that magnetism is due to the vibrations of molecules; while others account for its manifestations by polarity. Notwithstanding this diversity, their poverty of knowledge, many of these men believe implicity in their respective theories, and in the next breath deny that all the testimony of design exhibited in nature, in the very science they are investigating, shows any evidence of an intelligent Creator—thus adopting one rule of investigation as to matters in which their hearts are interested and prone and another when they are indifferent or adversely biased.

All men realize that human judgment is often unreliable. Twelve jurors hear the same evidence, and if the subject-matter involves antecedent prejudices or diverse interests, each juror honestly arrives at conclusions in accordance with his predelictions. Nine judges chosen for their ability, integrity, and learning, some of one political party and some of another, hear

alike all the facts and arguments of a case submitted for decision, yet each arrives at different results in exact conformity to his political bias, at the same time thoroughly impressed with the soundness of his views, which he elaborates in an able opinion.

So it is, a man not wishing to be bound by the restraints of the decalogue and the higher principles of Christian life, or from association, or other causes, finds little difficulty in convincing himself that God is entirely unknowable, that Christ was simply man, and the criminal laws are an adequate moral code. The religious man with the same knowledge, finding the precepts of the Old and New Testaments set forth rules of conduct in accordance with his own aspirations, contemplates with pleasure the benignity, the love, the morality of their authors, and readily believes in an all-wise and loving God and merciful Saviour.

The result arrived at in this paragraph is, the conclusions of the agnostic—of even Mr. Herbert Spencer, a truly great philosopher and a prince of "hypothesis," who has found in nature adequate circumstantial evidence for belief in a thousand theories regarding life and man, but no evidence of an intelligent Creator—are from his inconsistency entirely valueless.

No man can comprehend God—all men may apprehend Him.

AGNOSTICISM AND EVOLUTION

A fair statement of the main principles of the theory of evolution is that organic life, in its efforts to accommodate itself to its environment, is able to modify its components and to transmit such modified characteristics to its progeny. Those entities which cannot adapt themselves to the masterful conditions enveloping them perish in the struggle for life, while those modifying themselves to such conditions survive as the fittest to live, and in the majority of cases perpetuate their species accompanied by such desirable acquired characteristics.

In the case of vegetation where physical matter is alone concerned, evolution finds its field for modification chiefly in structure. With all animals intelligence plays a most important part in securing food, alliance of mates, and escaping dangers. Evolution of the mental faculties is to them no less important than the physical.

With regard to man, inasmuch as he possesses a high social and moral sense in addition to other qualities common to all animals, the individuals who regard obligations—such as truth, fidelity to duty, friendship, etc.—have in

all ages, savage and civilized, been preferred to the untrustworthy and selfish, and thereby escaped dangers, secured mates, and propagated offspring partaking of these characteristics.

Evolution, it is claimed, has therefore gradually, but most efficiently, been raising the social and moral standard of mankind.

Evolutionists regard these laws modifying species as inherent in organic life and as unvarying and controlling in their spheres as the laws of gravitation in their domain.

Christian evolutionists believe they are the laws of God; agnostic evolutionists that they were ordained by "They do not know whom or how."

But both schools of thought are generally agreed there is something in nature ever tending to produce higher forms of life out of the lower, and that nothing of consequence, when long periods and great numbers are considered, seems to exist to produce a retrograde movement in the development of life.

If the foregoing be a fair statement of the principles of evolution so far as they concern mankind as a social and moral creature, namely, his truth, his performance of duty, his friendship, his charity, in a word, his altruism, and if laws exist in harmony with and impelling man towards such moral development, then it results—provided the following facts be true—that agnosticism is opposed to and at war

with these laws of evolution, and that Christianity is a most powerful, aye, absolutely the most powerful aid such laws of evolution have ever engaged.

An examination of the directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx, composing the central part of the City of New York, for 1902-1903 will show that there are at least sixty-seven asylums and homes for aged men and women, friendless girls, orphans, sick seamen and soldiers, and the destitute generally, maintained by charitable institutions bearing conspicuously and characteristically a name associated with Christ; also that there are at least four hundred and twenty-six Christian churches. These churches probably will have an average membership of five hundred persons, and each church one society or guild for the relief of the poor and sick, making four hundred and twenty-six unincorporated voluntary organizations at work in the field of Christian charity and righteousness. There are seventeen colleges and academies, twelve nurseries, fifteen dispensaries, thirteen hospitals, and one hundred and fifty-five societies for Christian work, all using as their sign a name distinctly identified with Christ, and if it be estimated that one hundred persons are on an average affiliated with each of the foregoing two hundred and seventy-nine incorporated asylums and societies, there results that two hundred and forty thousand

Christian men and women out of one million two hundred and fifty-five thousand six hundred and seventy-six adults over twenty years of age (U. S. Census) are more or less actively participating in the moral improvement of their fellow citizens.

On the other hand, the writer has been unable to find in this directory a single society, association, or institution whose name would indicate its members were agnostics and were engaged in any work designed to teach men truth, the performance of duty, or the extension of the hand of charity.

If, therefore, there be some ruler, or some power, or some law of this world which has established the laws of evolution and it is intended by such power for its nature to be unknown and unknowable, then such supreme power has taken the very best means to thwart its purpose of evolutionary development so far as the social and moral nature of man is concerned.

But such a conclusion is absurd, and in proportion to its absurdity is agnosticism indefensible.

If on the other hand, evolution be the work of design—and it seems to be inconceivable for so much correlation in nature to exist without design,—then the extraordinary use of Christianity in the social and moral development of man is a strong evidence of its truthfulness.

PANTHEISM

Pantheism disputes atheism by asserting there is a God; it contradicts agnosticism by declaring the nature of God is known; it attacks the monotheism of Christianity by affirming God resides in everything—in the rocks, in water, in gases, in physical life, in the intellect of animals, in the moral sense of man, in my consciousness.

So far as my consciousness is concerned, I have no sensation, it is a part of God—I do not feel God to be within me, or any part of me. On the contrary, I have a very decided apprehension God is outside of me, that I am a weak animal of very limited powers, meagre knowledge, and imperfect judgment. I feel myself to be a creature, not a creator—a creature of definite functions to be exercised according to unvarying laws, which neither my ancestors nor myself have had any part in establishing. And if neither myself nor my ancestors established the laws of nature, whose ancestors have?

I have no reason to believe other men are on any substantially higher plane than myself. Many considerations lead me to believe the lower orders of animals and vegetable life, the

fluids, gases and rocks would be possessed of much less of the Godhead than myself.

So on the one subject I understand better than any other in whole range of my knowledge,—that is, my consciousness,—I have not the slightest sensation either by instinct or deduction that any part of the Godhead resides in me.

To set up therefore a theory opposed to the first principles of consciousness, it is submitted, must be unsound reasoning on which to account for the Primal Cause, for in all other matters, we find the instincts of consciousness are truthful.

* * * * * *

In the absence of definite demonstrable knowledge and where probability is the best conclusion to be arrived at, analogy, if the essential elements of the cases compared are similar, frequently leads to a reliable deduction and is the source of much knowledge.

The argument of analogy is based on the universal experience of mankind that like causes produce like effects and like effects may be traced backward to like causes.

Notwithstanding, as stated in the preceding paragraph, man's power over physical nature is limited to the moving of things, yet in the realms of his intellect and emotions he is a creator.

The architect having a conception of grandeur and of fitness caused stones to be moved together into definite structural positions which hold for centuries his conceptions, apparent to men. Yet who will affirm the relative position of the stones is still a part of the man who conceived the thoughts, and whose body may have moulded in the grave for generations? So with the poet, the painter, the inventor. Surely it will not be said the tragedies of Shakespeare are still a part of him, a million of steam engines a part of Fulton. The intellectual conceptions incorporated in them were their creations, they went out from them, and when gone were no longer part of their creators. God tints the evening sky with beauty, the painter conceives a glorious sunset and fastens its evanescent beauty on his canvas. God fills the world with pathos and love and patriotism, the gifted novelist creates the same emotions and holds his reader with tearful eyes. Turner is dead and Walter Scott is dead, but their creations still live. When once given birth they were no longer part of their creators.

So by analogy is it not probable that the creations of beauty and sublimity and patriot-

ism do not embody the essence of the Being which brought them into existence?

Pantheism by its definition incorporates God in these thoughts and emotions as much as it does in the rocks.

* * * * * *

An argument against pantheism is the law of evolution. Geological and biological investigations certainly demonstrate, if they show anything, that life has been evolved to higher and not lower states. If we confine the argument to man we find him endowed with a physical, intellectual, and moral nature. To attain the highest results these three components must develop with practically equal steps. It is now well recognized that the best specimens of manhood cannot be produced unless a man be physically and morally as well as intellectually strong. A deficiency in any one of these important characteristics puts him out of the race with men who possess them in a greater degree. Some place morals first, others intellect, and others a strong body. For the perfect man they should stand abreast.

Now man is in many respects an imitative animal. Nothing is better known than that he

is raised by association with virtue and lowered by contact with vice—he is elevated by the ennobling thoughts of truth, of love, and of charity; of power and of wisdom.

To conceive, therefore, that the Godhead resides in matter, in low unclean animals, in vicious beasts and men, would if thoroughly believed debase the believer and end in pagan idolatry. While on the other hand nothing has done more for the elevation of the human race in Christian lands than the high moral conceptions it has entertained of its God—clothing Him with majesty and glory, with wisdom and every virtue, and which it feebly and forever most imperfectly endeavors to imitate, yet in the imitation evolves a nobler creature.

If evolution be true, then pantheism cannot be.

* * * * * *

The only creative power on this earth is intellect, and the highest intellect is that of man. As stated above, such creative power is limited to mental conceptions—as beauty, sublimity, adaptability, love, fear, etc.—and the ability to move matter into positions to represent them. These conceptions are analogous to some of the phenomena observed in nature.

Is it not then in the absence of all demonstrative knowledge on the subject, a fair inference that the Creator of these analogous conceptions in nature possesses intellectuality the same as man?

To reject this only source of rationalistic knowledge and adopt the fanciful hypothesis that the Creator resides in all things—in stones and water, an hypothesis at war with all our knowledge—does seem to be contrary to principles of sound analogy.

EVOLUTION AND THE MORAL SENSE

Agnostic evolutionists endeavor to account for the human idea of God and morality by declaring both of these conceptions to be the result of deductions from experience and the transmission of the impress of such experience after the manner of instincts to progeny.

The primitive idea of God, they affirm, was derived from nature, as, in the return of bountiful summer with the sun; by the downfall of the beneficent rain with clouds; from the fear inspired by tornado, by lightning and thunder; by birth; by disease; by death, and innumerable other occurrences which impressed themselves powerfully on the minds of early men, and all of which were outside of them and beyond their control.

Hence, the conception of a supernatural being was begotten and transmitted by heredity. The Christian theist has no complaint with this theory. A material part of the argument herein advanced is built upon man's recognition of the Diety from His works—that God speaks to mankind in every phenomenon of nature, in every evidence of design; that it is impossible from human experience, which is that no corre-

lation of parts exists to produce definite results without an intelligent designer, for man to conceive the myriad evidences of design in nature were the outcome of blind chance and not the result of intelligence commensurate with the intricacy and extent of the combinations and results.

In regard to morality or man's duty to man, the agnostic evolutionist asserts that inasmuch as all men in all ages have perceived truth and justice and charity have been beneficial to themselves, that these qualities have been cultivated to an extent adequate to become hereditary.

It is not to be denied that in many cases morality and a predilection to vice have been transmitted to offspring; that all sensible men recognize the practice of these virtues contribute to their well being, and that such charactertistics are, as a rule, improved by association, intelligence and education. To this extent the theist agrees with the agnostic. But the Christian theist goes further and affirms man in his relations to man is a part of nature; that the practice of truth, justice and charity is as necessary for the life and development of the human species as gravitation is for the certain return of the seasons. If gravitation is perceived to be the work of an intelligent Creator, why should not truth, justice and charity, as essential in their sphere, have the same source?

Furthermore, the Christian theist asserts there are special reasons for believing the above moral qualities spring from God. In the entire domain of nature there is nothing but truth. No deception exists in any physical phenomenon. There is no injustice; no discrimination between mortals. Rain and sunshine and death await all with impartiality. God's providence is full of charity and kindness. How many weak mortals are constantly violating the laws of nature without suffering annihilation which has come to others for the same offence? How many have sinned, and not been found out, while others for less offences have suffered ignominy?

With such constantly recurring exhibitions of truth, justice and charity proceeding from the Creator as their source; with truth, justice and charity as the very foundation on which man's evolution must be built, and which are in perfect accord with the higher and higher development of this world, is not the probability convincing enough on which to base belief and action that these moral attributes of man have proceeded from the same high source?

SCIENCE

To the Christian mind there cannot be any contradiction between truly ascertained facts of nature and truly interpreted revelation. They both proceed from the Godhead—and God's works are harmonious.

If a fact of nature should be demonstrated beyond doubt, and it should be contrary to assumed revelation, the theologist should revise his interpretation of the Scriptures and ascertain his error. On the other hand, where there is a plain and unmistakable revelation opposed to an unverified scientific theory, the theory should be scrutinized again for its error. The past history of the sciences of physics and of theology demonstrates that neither are entitled to be considered infallible. Nothing is better known than the fact that the scientific truths of one age have been displaced by those of the following, and these in turn shown to be erroneous by still later investigations. So that none can affirm that a number of the accepted theories of the present time may not be displaced in the next century. The brevity of these discussions does not allow of the enumeration of the many changes in theories which have occurred

in chemistry, astronomy, geology, and biology, and unless man has attained the ultimate limit of knowledge—which no scientist will affirm—it is likely present conclusions must be abandoned or modified, and new ones take their place.

So with theology. This science has been altered to conform to ascertained facts, and some of its cherished beliefs will doubtless be modified in the future.

One instance each of the remolding of theories in the sciences of nature and of theology must suffice. The sun is losing heat by radiation into space at an inconceivably enormous rate. Investigation does not show adequate cooling in proportion to the amount of heat given off. To account for this discrepancy scientists fifty years ago generally accepted the conclusion that the heat was maintained by the falling of meteors into the sun attracted from space by its immense mass. At the present date this theory has been generally abandoned as insufficient to account for the ascertained phenomena—although many meteors doubtless do fall into the sun—and another substituted, namely, that the sun is in a gaseous, incandescent state, and by the force of its gravitation is condensing to a smaller sphere, and in consequence of such condensation is giving off its heat, just as air, gases, or any other matter when condensed parts with its heat.

In a former century Galileo adopted the Copernican theory, and asserted that instead of the sun moving around the earth every day, it remained practically at the center of the earth's orbit and the earth itself revolved on its axis in twenty-four hours. This announcement was received by the ecclesiastics with horror, and was pronounced by them to be "heretical and contrary to faith." Galileo was placed under arrest and sentence. Since then churchmen have, in view of the well-ascertained truths of astronomy, modified their theology. But many persons declared there was no truth in the Scriptures and became infidels, just as many have done since the theory of evolution has been discussed.

But there is no more real antagonism between evolution and the Scriptures than there was between the daily revolution of the earth on its axis and the Old Testament. One of the most important assumed contradictions between the theory of evolution and revelation is the Mosaic account of the creation, and particularly the use of the word "day" in giving the order of sequence of the cosmogony. But clearly the term "day" may not have been understood by the inspired writer in the restricted sense of twenty-four hours. Nothing changes more than the meaning of words, and particularly their use by early unscientific writers when compared to the more exact lexicography of the

present time. The expression "day" may originally have designated a cycle, an era, an epoch—for a thousand years, aye, a million, in the sight of God, may be as one day, as a watch in the night.

SCIENCE AND COSMOGONY

As stated in the preceding paragraph, the truly ascertained facts of Nature and correctly interpreted Revelation being both emanations from God, there can be no antagonism between them. It is therefore important to understand clearly what Revelation teaches and to test its important facts with truth derived from Nature.

1. Revelation declares that an all powerful, all intelligent God created the heavens and the earth and all that therein is.

Does Science in any domain of its investigations contradict this proposition? No astronomer can point to one ascertained fact in disproof. No geologist can even suggest any other creator for the rocks. They may shield themselves behind agnosticism and declare they have no proof—that they do not know how nature came—but this position is not inconsistent with revelation that God made them. It neither affirms nor denies.

No biologist has created the spark of life. So far as we know, life is an unbroken chain from the dawn of creation to the present instant. It may be that all, even the highest animals, have

developed from a single protoplasmic cell. But this is not inconsistent with the Mosaic cosmogony, or incompatible with God's creation of them.

Modern scientific research has generally agreed upon the following order of events in the evolution of nature.

1. There existed gaseous or nebulous matter without form.

2. In this attenuated state the matter was dark.

3. Under the influence of the laws of gravitation such matter aggregated and by condensation emitted heat and light.

4. The aggregation of matter towards a center of gravity produced a rotary motion. Those revolving masses of matter having their surfaces next to the great incandescent central masses would be illuminated, while the opposite sides would be dark. This constituted the first division of light and darkness, or day and night. The above sequence of events is in exact accord with the Mosaic account.

5. The influence of gravitation in forming globes of these inconceivably great nebulous masses, necessarily made concrete suns, comets, etc.

This constitutes the Mosaic firmament called Heaven—we also call it "The Heavens"—and indicates the formation of suns as distinguished from the planetary systems of suns. Accord-

ing to Genesis and Science this was accomplished next after the creation of light.

6. In the earliest epochs of creation two of the most important and largely distributed gases were hydrogen and oxygen. The union of these constituted then, as now, water. So universal was the vapor of water, and water, before the formation of rocks, and so liquid is highly heated matter, all the planets might fairly be described as waters, and when the centrifugal force of any revolving mass was greater than its centripetal force, a portion would be thrown off with an independent revolution, and "divide the waters from the waters." Thus was constituted the planetary systems of all the great suns including our own.

This is the order usually stated in nebular hypotheses, viz: first the conglomeration of a central sun, and next the throwing off of attendent planets. This is also the order of creation as narrated by Moses.

7. We now come to the consideration of the earth. As stated above, in the earliest periods of its creation, the vapor of water and water were one of the most abundant compounds. Geologists can state only approximately the inconceivably great quantity of water contained in the rocks, crystals, and other substances of the earth's surface. There is practically nothing anhydrous. So that by the absorption of water in the formation of solids, by its percolation

into the strata of the earth, where it became heated and formed steam and raised the earth's surface, dry land and seas were formed—for the elevation of land at one place of necessity lowers level at another. The usual geological account of creation calls for plant life next after the appearance of dry land. The carboniferous era in which the great coal measures were laid, and their depths, even on the sides of mountains, show indubitably their very early origin.

The above events practically correspond in exact order with the third Mosaic day.

8. Prior, and extending, to nearly the close of the carboniferous state of the earth's existence, in consequence of the vast quantity of water on its surface, of its own internal heat, and the higher heat of the sun than at present, immense masses of vapors or clouds obscured at all times the sun and stars, but not their light—as is probably the case with the planet Venus at this day.

Then on the disappearance of the thick envelope of vapor the stars for the first time appeared and with them the disks of the sun and moon, which "marked the seasons and days and years."

Here again science and the Mosaic account coincide.

9. The geologist and biologist and Moses are agreed the first of life was begotten in the

waters, and began possibly in the Laurentian seas. Briefly, it developed from foraminiferae through fishes to amphibuous animals and swimming mammals.

10. There are in museums of natural history the fossil remains of half reptiles and half birds, showing a gradual transformation of some of the inhabitants of the water into "winged fowls." This constitutes a remarkable confirmation of the record of Genesis, for "winged fowls" were created immediately after the things which "moved in the waters."

11. Next, the rocks and sediments of the earth's crust show "winged fowls" developed into creatures with teeth like bats, some living no longer on grass and seeds but on insects and flesh; in other cases expanding toes became fewer in number, the wings changing into dwarfed forelegs, like the kangaroo which brings forth its young in an immature state. Thus in the cycles of time the cloven hoofed animals were produced, that is, cattle and swine and the Mosaic order is cattle next after the fowls. Some mammalia and snakes have been found in the deposits of the Eocene period, and following their advent, animals of the field came generally in the Miocene, the next era. The twenty-fourth verse of the first chapter of Genesis records this same succession.

12. Scientific men agree that the theory of evolution places man's creation as the last. The scriptural account does the same.

It will hardly be contended that when the account of the creation was written mankind was learned in natural science. There is no writing extant to show men were skilled in astronomy, or possessed of telescopes so necessary for ascertaining the nature of the firmament. There was no knowledge of gaseous or nebulous masses or conditions, or of the laws of gravitation and their effects in producing heat, light, rotation, suns, and planetary systems, and yet in the six preceding items we have an accurate outline of the nebular hypothesis which has received general acceptance since the days of Laplace, and stated in the exact order of occurrence.

The Mosaic narrative gives great prominence to the order or succession of events. This, it seems, is apparently of more importance than any other one characteristic of the recital. Clearly, it places its own credibility upon its order of the narration and impliedly challenges contradiction.

As enumerated above there are six distinct and well ascertained agreements between the Mosaic account and the cosmic order of nature. There has not been, so far as the writer is aware, one event in the formation of the firmament narrated by Moses which has been shown to be out of its natural sequence.

Now when there are six events of such uncertain order of occurrence as the above and which

an unlearned mind on the subject has to place in correct order the chances are 719 to one that he will misplace them.

When to these odds are added the statements that matter was at first nebulous, and its then attenuated state was dark, that under the influence of gravitation it became luminous and described orbits, and formed suns which turned on their axes, and threw off attendant planets, the conclusion is irresistible that some mind more learned than man's at that day, indited the story.

We have also reason to believe, when Moses wrote geological and biological science was unknown. No man then knew whether fishes were produced before fowls, or man before cattle. Each division of animal life was apparently distinct from the other.

When there are four independent facts to be stated by a person without knowledge to guide their arrangement there are 23 chances to one he will name them in the wrong order. But Moses placed them in the succession since assigned by geological evolutionists.

It seems to my mind that this demonstration is conclusive of the Inspiration of the Old Testament.

If this Book be inspired then it follows an intelligent God exists; from the existence of an intelligent God who revealed the Mosaic ac-

count of the Creation, it follows that He was the God of the Old Testament; from His being the God of the Old Testament it follows as the New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament that He is the God of the New Testament.

SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

The second and remaining primary truth of revelation is that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that he arose from the dead.

Does science disprove these facts? If so, in what division of science is it to be found? The sole argument against them is, no man living has seen a dead man come to life. If the facts of the case ended there, if no other consideration entered into the subject than the return of life to a cadaver, the argument would apparently be conclusive.

But the Christian religion is founded essentially and avowedly on the supernatural. The immaculate conception of Jesus, His miracles contravening the ordinary laws of nature, His resurrection, are each and all above nature. All science can say, it is beyond its domain, there is nothing in nature like it—more, it may even truthfully say the burden of proof is on the Christian. To this the disciples of Christ enthusiastically answer they accept the challenge, and point, First, to the wonderful laws which govern the universe as evidence of an all-wise and intelligent Supreme Being—a Supernatural Being as their Creator. Second, That the

results of these laws—namely, the harmonious revolutions of the sun and his system of planets and their effects, the development on this earth of inorganic matter and of organic life in such remarkable unison and sympathy, the blue sky, the liquid waters, the green fields and fruits and grain, the wonderful mechanism of animals, aye, even the ability of vegetable and animal life to evolve according to definite laws; the domestic happiness of all creatures, their love of life, the myriad unperceived mercies and pleasures they enjoy, the higher and nobler life of man—all point to and demonstrate that this Supernatural Being cares for, aye, loves every living thing.

Granted such a Being exists—and no other hypothesis accounts for nature—and loves his creatures, what more probable conclusion, in order to appeal to this higher nature of man, to lead him to a still nobler life, to carry out His own beneficent designs that higher and yet higher creations are in the order of His Foreknowledge and Design, than that God should come Himself on earth to man, in the most sympathetic and appealing manner, namely, as a man in human flesh so as to be perceived and known by men? Would such conduct be beyond the measure of His love or the range of His power? Nothing is more likely to a Being who has created this beautiful world and allowed His creatures to adapt themselves so

joyously to it. Would such a Father confine Himself to administering only to the demands of the body? Does not an earthly father seek to improve the morals and best nature of his son? Is not God as loving as the man of this earth?

This Supernatural Being saw below Him a part of His creation possessed of intellectual and moral attributes. It needed greater direction and development. In His providence the time had come for a great advance, physically, intellectually, and morally. This advance could not take place in the natural order of events without increased morality among men. Peace must abide for the mind to apply itself to the arts and sciences. He therefore sent His Son, "The Prince of Peace."

If there was no other argument in favor of the divinity of Christ than the advance of the human race since and in consequence of His ministry, its amazing development should be enough to convince any unbiased mind of the truth of Christ's resurrection.

Surely an all-truthful, all-loving, and caretaking God would not have allowed this extraordinary progress of the human race to have been based on, and to continue as, a result of a falsehood. Even men in the affairs of this world, when important matters are involved, are almost universally truthful.

The argument results in this, to reject Christ is to reject God as a loving and truthful Ruler of the world; to accept God is to accept Christ; to accept Christ involves belief in His truthfulness; that is, in His divinity and resurrection.

IMMORTALITY AND TRUTH

Assuming an intelligent God created the world, I think it results from the following chain of purely rational argumentation that the moral nature of man is immortal.

The most obtrusive fact while studying the physical laws of nature is their unvarying character. Gravitation is invariably ready to assert itself; the laws of light, of heat, and of sound are unfailing, and so on in the entire domain of nature there is no shadow of an exception, no variableness, no deception.

The moral laws encompassing mankind on every side are no less certain. To deny there is a God surely reduces the atheist to a lower plane of manhood. He is not the joyous man of elevated and ennobling aspiration as he who bows in reverence to the Creator. To take His Holy Name in vain brings the defamer into disrepute. To dishonor one's father and mother, the offender dishonors himself. To murder, to steal, to commit adultery, to lie, and to covet are all visited by disapprobation, loss of respect, or infamy to the violator's good name and worldly success and happiness. These moral laws are universal, certain in their consequences and truthful.

So far then as the nature of God may be judged from His works, it may be affirmed that one of His predominating characteristics is Truth; and this is the major premise of the argument.

Man is certainly, either immediately, or remotely by evolution, the creation of God; but whether one or the other he is His creature. He is so far as this earth is concerned His highest and best creation—a creation wherein he has allowed a mental development to expand until it has the ability to solve and thoroughly understand a number of His most intricate phenomena and laws, and a moral nature to possess him which teaches him right and wrong, with an active conscience to render him happy or to sting him with remorse, dependent upon whether he pursues the good or abandons himself to evil, and as a part of this conscience a recognition of God, and hope and belief, as far as things unseen can be believed, in immortality.

In the next place, God has developed, or allowed to be developed—which is the same thing, in a Creator having the power to order differently—in man a mental and moral intellectuality qualifying him to believe in Immortality. Again, God has allowed this sentiment to be born in the hearts of nearly all men, savage and civilized, as a part of their very being, but more or less perfectly and nobly, when not perverted by false reasonings, as the individual has attained intellectuality.

To permit this idea to be taken possession of by mankind, to become a part of the warp and woof of life, to modify its actions in the most important concerns of its existence, and then for it to be a dream, a falsehood, is to impeach the truthfulness of God's dealings with man, is to charge His inconceivable Righteousness and Holiness with practicing a deception on His creatures and all for no motive and no profit to Himself.

The argument reduces itself to this, unless God has deceived man, He intends him to enjoy immortality. And as confirmatory of this conclusion, let it be noticed, as far as we can judge, this hope, this idea of immortality is confined to the genus Man and denied to all the lower creation.

SIN

Without attempting to pass a theological judgment upon any subject discussed, it being entirely foreign to the scope of this book, and consequently on the question whether the account in Genesis as to the fall of Adam and the introduction of sin in this world was allegorical or is to be taken in its literal sense, it is nevertheless probable in a purely rational consideration of the subject, that the feeble powers of man in contest with his natural environment account for many of the sins to which he is addicted, and afford a strong corrobation to the truth of the Genesis narrative that man's disobedience and sin were indissolubly linked with the earning of his bread by the sweat of his brow.

Man is an animal. He must eat, and have raiment and shelter for his body. He, for the most part, finds himself in a climate and on a soil yielding after his best efforts scarcely more than enough to feed, clothe, and house himself and his family. He looks around and discovers others in sharp competition with himself. Selfishness is begotten in his heart, and all the sins which have their roots in it. His body is often

weak, sometimes he cannot even work. His necessities, actual or from habit, or from desire to please those dependent on him, urge him to appropriate what belongs to others, or to circumvent them by false pretenses. Thus is born the sin of theft. Occasionally, concomitant with theft, follows murder—always, if detection can be prevented, lies. Covetousness is the father of fraud.

SIN PERMITTED

It follows logically from the foregoing argument that God has permitted sin to exist in this world.

Modern scientific research renders it probable that a number of vegetables and animals have since the earth became inhabited gradually developed into higher and higher states by force of their environment and individual efforts to overcome obstacles; that God's method is, the living being, if it would continue to live and grow better and stronger, and transmit valuable acquired characteristics to its progeny, must work.

Now this law of evolution is equally applicable to the moral nature of man. To rise from the mere animal, which is, with few exceptions, gross selfishness, to a high plane of altruism, man must practice self-denial. He cannot deny himself unless he suffers thereby privation, and there is no privation if every necessity of his nature be gratified without effort. That is to say, if there be no temptation to sin, there can be no effort to improve morally; and without effort the moral nature of man would wither, like his muscles would shrink, if he forebore all attempt at work.

THE MORAL FUTURE OF MANKIND

From all analogies it is probable man will develop morally into a higher and higher being. But this state will not be attained without effort. Sin must be met and its temptations conquered. From victorious battles alone will evolve this nobler man. The temptations may even become stronger than we now know them, but the power of resistance by inheritance and by higher moral development will keep pace with the necessities for successful warfare to accomplish moral growth, until in the vast future a true millenium may come when the lion and the lamb, figuratively, but man and man in reality, will lie down together in perfect peace.

It thus appears that though the account of the fall of Adam be taken in its literal interpretation and sin came through his disobedience—the actual disobedience of eating the apple—the all-merciful God in His love for His creatures is bringing good out of evil—is preparing man for a higher and nobler life in consequence of resistance to sin and which He has given him the ability successfully to combat.

NATURAL LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

If it be true man's moral being is endowed with immortality, there is no reason this life should not be a school for its development. On the contrary, there is a strong argument that it is; namely, the importance God has placed upon obedience to His moral laws, as shown by the native pleasure experienced by men when they do right and the remorse suffered when they do wrong, and the social consequences which follow respectively the pursuit of virtue or vice.

As the moral nature is the one to live beyond the grave, why at death should it forget its past experiences? Why should God ignore the instincts of man which carry his soul with its knowledge and characteristics into the future state?

In nature nothing is done uselessly. Every act, every part has its appropriate function. Is it not probable from this universal law that the moral efforts of men on earth should follow the moral nature of men in their future existence?

If this be so, there is the greatest utility in striving for moral excellence in this life.

SIN AND PROVIDENCE

There is no doubt the moral sense of man is one of the very strongest constituents of his nature. As stated in the preceding paragraph, to do right affords the highest pleasure, to commit sin entails grief.

From a purely rational point of view these phenomena, which are universal, demonstrate the obnoxiousness of sin to the Divine Creator.

Why is sin so condemned by God? Why does He give its successful resistance so important a place in this world?

These questions are rationally answered, first, on the hypothesis that God's plan is growth of every being by individual effort of such being. Second, that the development of His Creation as to beings (not laws) is not yet finished for this world. Third, that indulgence in sin retards this development of man; that the resistance of evil advances his perfection, and as perfection is the goal towards which all things are tending under the fiat of the Almighty, indulgence in sin, therefore, thwarts His purpose and retards the consummation of His Holy Providence, ordained from before the world began.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE OF GOD

The term "special providence" is here used to signify, God alters the ordinary course of events in consequence of prayer, or for other adequate reasons.

From a purely rational consideration of the subject the most convincing argument in favor of such special providence is, the instinct with all races of men to pray to the Supreme Being of their conceptions, when in dire calamity, or when possessed with overwhelming desires. As stated in the views on the immortality of the soul, we start with the fundamental propositions that God is Truth; that He has created, or allowed with His permission, man to develop the consciousness that He will answer supplication, and therefore such consciousness must represent the truth.

It is inconceivable the Creator should have permitted men for thousands of years to have offered up continuously the deepest and noblest yearnings of their hearts when it has all been a farce.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE AND EXPERIENCES

Thousands of truthful and intelligent men would be ready any day to certify they have experienced in their lives manifestations of God's special providence.

While the experiences of men make such interpositions of Providence probable, they do not preclude the conclusion that the results might have happened in the ordinary course of events. For example, a people in time of drought may offer up prayers for rain, and shortly after it does rain. While the occurrence of rain following promptly on prayer and at a time when the meteorological conditions are adverse gives probability to the special providence, yet none can prove the rain might not have come without the petitions.

Thus the uncertainty of proof gives rise to the exercise of faith, which we shall see in the next paragraph performs so important a part in God's providence.

Of course if all prayers were followed by fulfillment of their supplications, the calculation of probabilities would heap up such a fortified conclusion it would amount to absolute certainty,

but prayers are not always answered fully; indeed, it may be affirmed, many of them are not answered at all, and therefore the occasional coincidence of prayer and events is not a certain demonstration of their efficiency in securing the interposition of God.

Yet religious men do believe their entreaties are so often heard and granted, they, and the writer is among them, not only do not falter but are highly encouraged to beseech the throne of Grace on every important matter in life.

FAITH

Why faith in God and in His mercy should be the means by which men are restored to health and have other blessings attend their supplications is not difficult to understand when it is fully appreciated, God is generation after generation bringing man by his own efforts to a higher and higher moral status, and that such development is a part of the Deity's government of this earth, the ultimate end of which is "His kingdom shall come on earth as it is in Heaven."

The act of faith, of intense faith, marks a great advance in the moral nature of any man. Some men have not yet reached the capacity of being able to exercise faith. It is an act independent of intellectuality or knowledge of worldly facts. It belongs to another domain of man's being; to that part of his nature which stretches out for the metaphysical, for things beyond time and sense; to an inner consciousness of the Supreme Being, and which may be the gift of the Holy Spirit of God.

By making His special providences wait only on faith God has taken the very best means to

inculcate this sentiment, and as faith in Him begets, in the most efficacious manner, a higher nature in the individual practicing it, so man is brought, by his own efforts, in conformity to God's general plan of creation, to a nobler and more perfect moral creature.

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

Constant complaints by the skeptical are made, why is not God more clearly revealed to man? Why if there be a heaven and a hell has not some definite knowledge been given of them? Why is Christ's mission not attested to men of the present time? These, with other questions of a similar character, are constantly asked.

Assuming as a premise the physical body is developed only by exercise of its parts; that mental ability is acquired by mental study; that moral excellence grows from a practice of virtue, abstinence from sin and yearnings for higher ideals; in other words, that growth is the result of effort, then it follows logically, if God had made Himself as plain as the sun, and immortality a demonstrable fact ever present to the mind, and Christ a reality greater than He was to His apostles, this very knowledge, this certainty would dwarf the moral sense by requiring no effort to search for the truth, and all those developments of the soul, now the result of research, of strivings to know, of hope, would be absent, and the creature would fail to unfold the moral sense or to grow into the perfect life for which he is destined.

The exercise of faith stimulates the imagination, makes the pursuit of knowledge of the Deity most entrancing, and as the result of such efforts raises the man to a higher moral being.

This, I believe, is the reason God in His infinite wisdom has required faith.

THE LOVE OF GOD

An instance of the Love of God, not only to man, but to His entire animal creation, is most clearly demonstrated by the love for life shown by every living creature.

So beautiful is this world in which God has placed His animal life, so enjoyable are its pleasures of companionship, its offerings to the appetites and senses, so pleasant is the mere act of living, that the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the animals of the land, all flee from danger and seek to save their lives.

Such bounty, such a gift of pleasure sprang only from love.

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

On this highly complex earth, where everything is organized and governed to produce certain results, where definite laws act at every moment upon both organic and inorganic matter, and which are all, doubtless, the subject of exact mathematical statement and analysis, the only legitimate and logical conclusion to be drawn from this universal reign of law is, this world is the work of an intelligent Creator and not of chance.

A conclusion the physicist and moralist agree on is, every law has a definite design; more yet, every law has some useful purpose as its end or reason for existence; in a word, its intelligent Creator has made no law at haphazard or for naught.

This being granted, why has our Creator placed so much importance upon obedience by man to His moral laws? Why are we required to have no other gods but Him? Why are we to love Him with all our hearts and souls and minds? What good can such an insignificant creature as myself—a mere atom in His universe—do my great Creator by loving Him? Surely no man living will be vain enough to think his love is of itself of value to God?

These commandments are not to benefit the Creator, but to do good to man himself—to make him better, wiser, and nobler; to increase his own spirituality; to cause him to overcome sin, for sin to the moral nature of man is the analogue of labor to his physical being, and each must be contented with in order for growth to take place.

If, therefore, it be true none of God's laws are in vain, that man has an instinctive law impressed on his heart requiring him to love his Maker with his best efforts, the question suggests itself, is not the injunction to love God a somewhat useless and unnecessary requirement if death is to be the end of man's moral nature? While on the other hand, is not the proposition, God does not require obedience to His moral laws for an insufficient purpose much better gratified by assuming all this labor demanded of man to resist sin, to bring himself by effort to obedience to moral laws, to subdue and conquer his natural propensities, are for the purpose of developing within himself a higher nature—not a nature made worthier and nobler by so much self-denial, and then to die with the body—but a spirit, to live and grow holier and more righteous in its immortality.

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It is the almost universal belief of astronomers that the stellar universe was primordially gaseous, next nebulous of unformed constellations, then suns of immense dimensions, which have finally thrown off attendant planets. For this earth to have advanced from matter in a gaseous state, "without form and void," to its present heterogeneity and unity, to its beauty and adaptability to support life, it shows the Creator's scheme has been one of grand development to higher and higher standards.

If the attention be confined to this earth where more exact data is obtainable, the geologists can trace in the formation of its crust, from the archaic rocks to the present uppermost stratum, a more and more complex character, suitable as it advanced, by the substances it contained, for the support of a higher life than each of the lower formations. The paleontologists are of opinion from an examination of the fossils contained in the rocks that life, both vegetable and animal, has become more and more developed as successive strata were deposited. The naturalists of the present day are almost universally persuaded that vegetables and animals have by natural selection, the survival of the fittest to live, and the transmission of desirable characteristics to progeny, grown from inferior species to the intelligent specimens of life inhabiting at this time the earth. In all these things it has been growth towards betterment.

I think this same law of growth has applied to the mental and moral attributes of men. The present civilization of the human race—which far surpasses all previous states, shown in man's exact formulation of natural laws and his dominion over nature in consequence of such knowledge—is an unanswerable proof he has grown mentally to an immense degree.

The history of the world is full of evidences of morality being higher in this century than ever before. Wars have grown less frequent than anterior to the birth of Christ; the rights and position of woman more respected; murder, theft and all crimes not only punished by appropriate means and more certainly, but the criminal is viewed in a truer light, until, although the world is yet too full of sin, the morality of mankind in Christian countries has never, as a general rule, stood on so high a plane.

So a retrospect of all things will show, in a broad sense, there has been development to higher states. This advance upward seems to be God's own law, and no exception occurs to me when long periods are considered.

Another general principle of universal application is, the creation everywhere exhibits evidences of design. As far as known, all things have their uses. Limit our observation to man and we find no parts but what have functions to perform. Remove the brain, or heart, or lungs,

etc., and the individual promptly dies. This observation might be extended to all vegetable and animal life, and a fair logical deduction from the foregoing observations is, there is no part of the Creator's work but what was fashioned for adequate purposes. This agrees entirely with the idea of an all-wise and powerful Creator, who would not expend effort without very definite and adequate results to follow.

From these two propositions, viz, that the moral nature of man is intended for growth into higher excellencies, and this growth is designed for adequate effects to follow, the question arises, do the moral excellencies attained by man in this short life reasonably and adequately fulfill the purposes of an all-wise and powerful Creator, who could by His fiat establish a future life for man as easily as He has made his existence for this world? Would not you, would not I, possessed of such power as Almighty God possesses and having made man in this life the subject of moral laws, with strong instincts towards betterment, would we not have continued his moral existence in a future world and not have limited his existence with death of the body.

The extent of the probability of such action by a wise and sufficiently powerful man is a logical measure of one of the probabilities of the immortality of man's moral nature.

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The only argument against the belief that the soul of man is immortal is, when man dies there is a visible cessation of all mental and moral attributes and faculties.

This is an argument of decided weight and not to be overlooked by any one sincerely anxious to arrive at truth. After the best consideration I can give the subject I am of opinion this argument is not conclusive against immortality, and for the following reasons:

The functions of the body when death supervenes certainly cease. Death puts an end to the acquisition of knowledge by sight, by taste, by smell, by touch, and by hearing. Such ideas and such mentality are certainly destroyed. But there are other classes of thought not dependent on the functions of the senses except for their initial knowledge, such as memory, generalization, and deduction from previous experiences. These stand on the higher plane where mental functions act on mental facts, and are in their nature metaphysical. I recall incidents of my earliest childhood. They have been lost to my consciousness for many years. Where has the knowledge of such facts been kept? Has it been stored up in physical matter by deposit of nerve granules or otherwise? Such an explanation is a mere assumption by the wisest physiologist. He can neither prove nor disprove such an assertion. Memory and the syllogistic process are beyond physics.

The physiologist may, however, reply, I agree I cannot prove such mentalities are processes of matter, but you cannot prove they are processes of the spirit. This may well be admitted, as the present argument only requires the admission of the probability that they may not be physical processes pure and simple.

The same reasoning applies in a rather stronger manner to the moral attributes of man, and by which is meant, the instinctive recognition of a Godhead and man's duty to Him, and the moral sense of right and wrong, with the consciousness of obligation to do right and avoid wrong.

This consciousness of moral obligation, it is true, is in a thousand ways woven in with ordinary knowledge and thought, and is often higher in proportion to the intellectuality of individuals—indeed to such an extent, some affirm that conscience is a child of intelligence. This proposition I believe in a large degree to be false, for men often more ignorant than others have far higher experiences in the knowledge and love of God and lead more moral lives than the most learned. So it cannot be affirmed that intellectuality and morality are absolutely identical either in their origin or development.

The objector may, however, answer, and with apparent reason, the beasts of the field exhibit ratiocination, memory, affection, re-

venge, selfishness, and such other traits, and it is not claimed their natures are immortal.

No claim is made for their immortality, because there is no evidence the great Creator has given them that instinctive belief and hope. If He had, I would promptly believe they would enjoy immortality, for I cannot think God would deceive any of His creatures, the lowliest—the worm.

It is true, beasts do exhibit, and in some instances to an astonishing degree, the reasoning faculties, and when they die these die with them, not because of death of body, but because God has decided they are not sufficiently developed to enjoy and perform the duties of a future life.

The argument, therefore, reduces itself in my mind to this, death is not necessarily the end of man's moral consciousness. If this conclusion be accepted as probable, a great step has been taken in arriving at the ultimate probability of immortality, and this probability should induce men to act on it, for its acceptance cannot possibly work injury, but certainly, even in this life, produces a nobler and happier man.

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The skeptic on the subject of immortality may advance this further consideration, the assumption that the mind and moral faculties of man survive the death of his body is entirely without analogy to any known facts.

My own mind answers this objection in this manner. It is not true we have no instance of intelligence and moral nature independent of the body. On the contrary, we have the very highest evidence of a Being who possesses intellectuality and morality, and who has neither flesh, nor blood, nor vibrating nerve—and He is God Himself. As shown in the first paragraph of this book, God to have established the complex laws of electricity, of forces, of gravitation, of chemistry must Himself have possessed the intelligence to have understood what he was ordaining, and such intelligence as man at this day is endowed with in a comparatively feeble degree. But no one will hardly pretend that God, who has made all these illimitable worlds, whose dominion extends to infinity of space, has the flesh and blood and nerve of men.

The answer to the skeptic, therefore, stands good that a physical body, like man's, is not necessary in order to be the abode of mind and the moral sense.

EXCELSIOR

The best judgment I can form, on a survey of the facts of nature, convinces me that the fundamental law underlying all things is development from lower to higher and more complex states. This complexity is, however, not associated with confusion or antagonism, but with an order and correlation of parts commensurate with their development, and forming, as a resultant, an harmonious whole.

As stated in a preceding paragraph all astronomers are agreed that many of the concrete suns and planets at present in the firmament are the product of less organized gaseous and nebulous masses of matter. In the years of infinite time and in the regions of infinite space there has been going on a development by condensation under the influences of gravitation, and of cooling by the equalizing properties of heat, of formation of more complex substances by oxidation and the action of acids, until we have in our own case an earth adapted for the support of vegetable and animal life.

There is no reason to suppose this globe in its formation is any exception to other spheres, or our sun with its planetary system is different

from other suns and systems. On the contrary, there are many circumstances to show, they are all governed by the same law of gravitation, and the spectroscope discloses indisputable proof that many substances composing the most distant suns are found on our planet.

Nor is there any good reason to conclude the processes so active in bringing about the present status of stellar existence have ceased to work as efficiently as ever. No diminution in the motion of the stars is observable, the diffusive properties of heat are as energetic in cooling the globes as when first established, the condensation in consequence of gravitation and loss of heat is still energetic in solidifying suns and planets, for the bolometer actually shows a loss of heat in distant suns and measures the quantity given off. The result is, therefore, the development of the creation is still going on, and if appearances from so distant a standpoint as the earth can be relied upon, a number of fixed stars nearest us are apparently only in the infancy of their evolution as compared to our earth.

The explorations of the earth's crust, and they have been comparatively very few and limited, show both in the character of the successive layers and the fossils they contain that much antecedent life has been of an inferior order to the present species inhabiting this globe. The labors of earnest and honest biolo-

gists demonstrate changes are now going on in life as incessantly and as actively as at any time in the past; that some species have become extinct and new ones produced more and more adapted to their environment, with a general resultant of higher vegetable and animal organism and intelligence.

Nor is it to be doubted the masses of mankind, since historic times, have shown an advancing mentality. In the domains of science, wherein the laws of nature have been discovered and the forces of nature yoked as servants of man, there is no comparison between the capacity of the ante-christian and the scientist of the twentieth century. So that I feel convinced there has been some improvement in the mentality of the human race within even historic times. What has been the enormous advance over men before they had learned enough to record their acts and thoughts we can only conjecture.

In regard to the moral status of mankind, we are only positively safe in comparisons within historic periods. When one recalls the wars of the earliest Asiatic nations, the slaughter of the people of Babylon and Nineveh, the wars of the kings who surrounded the Jews, the conquests of Alexander, the carnage by the Romans, by the Huns, the disregard of life and property in the Middle Ages, the cruelty of man to man everywhere, and compares it with

the short wars of the present era, with the few lives lost in battle in proportion to the tens of thousands slain formerly in a single conflict, to accomplish which a perfect gluttony for slaughter must have possessed the combatants, when surrender now does not mean death, but protection; when the civilized lands are filled with hospitals for the sick, with houses to shelter the poor and friendless; when, in a general sense, every man is the friend of every other man, and all join to protect the helpless from the strong; when slavery is abolished and nearly all are secured the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; when it is an honor, a recommendation, to serve God, and to be a pure man, I think it may be safely concluded the morality of mankind is higher today than at any other period of which history records.

The generalization to be drawn from this brief retrospect is, God's purposes as incorporated in His original creation are still unfolding themselves; not that the creation was not completed substantially in the manner narrated in the Books of Genesis, for astronomy, geology, and biology offer their testimony that the order of creation therein set forth must have been followed. Creation consisted not only of objects created, but of laws to govern them, and it is these laws which will allow the myriad universes and all therein contained to evolve in

wondrous ways new creatures in the vast periods of infinite time for the purpose of bringing about inconceivably grand results as yet buried in His own foreknowledge.

Another thought; if the foregoing deductions be true, then each man may by pursuing the good be a conscious servant of the All-High God in bringing about, more speedily than otherwise, the ultimate end of creation, namely, "the coming of God's Kingdom."

When such a thought possesses a man's soul with its full significance, there is nothing more ennobling than the conviction, he may be the agent of God actually working in His domains, and what he does may leave its impress for all time.

HEAVEN

An unprejudiced and competent study of all known natural phenomena of the universe, it is believed, will lead to the conclusion that no part of nature is quiescent; that changes more or less active are going on in every domain, forming new worlds in the stellar depths, new inorganic substances on our own earth, new organic beings in the seas and on the land, and that nothing is absolutely fixed and finally formed except the qualities of matter and the laws of nature, and as to these there is no reason to believe they have varied from the time the original fiat brought them into existence, or that they will vary in the infinity of the future.

Another conclusion equally probable will be, although there may have been a retrogression in some instances, yet in the vast majority of changes there has been a development from simpler forms to the complex, from lower to the higher order. This seems to be the Creator's method, and no where is to be found absolute permanency.

The popular idea of Heaven is a state of complete perfection of souls who have conformed in this life to the commandments of

God, and who in His infinite love and mercy has pardoned their offences and received them into His bosom—a place of angelic beatitudes where sin is unknown, temptations forbidden, and absolute enjoyment provided without change or effort.

This state of affairs is at variance with what is apparently God's method with His visible creations, and if the case is to be judged by the argument of analogy, namely, if a workman invariably performs many tasks in a certain manner it is sound reasoning to believe he will perform other tasks on similar lines, then I should think Heaven was a state of activity, of duties to be performed suitable for disembodied spirits, possibly of trials, of temptations to be overcome in order that the soul in conquering them may grow nobler and more worthy to approach nearer and nearer to God's presence and to understand more clearly His infinitudes and thus to enjoy ever increasing happiness.

A legitimate deduction from the foregoing observation is, if there be a task, there must be capacity for performance; if a duty, there must be free will, and probably reward for endeavor and punishment for failure of adequate effort; and finally, that angels or rather souls are as much, it may be more, on their responsibility to conform to God's laws which permeate and govern the unseen than mankind is on this earth.

If this be so, if duty and free will exist in Heaven, then some as in this life will devote every energy to the performance of their obligations, some may exhibit only a mediocre effort, while others may be guilty of actual disobedience and rebellion.

On this purely rational method of reasoning from facts known to the intelligence of mankind, the Scriptural account of the existence, disobedience, and fall of Satan as an angel is rendered highly probable. From the multitudes of worlds known to exist in space, and the probability that some are very similar to our earth, it is possible Satan may have been an inhabitant of one of them.

THE HEAVENLY STATE

A constant argument used in these discussions to establish the Christian religion is the presumption that a given law will be applicable in analogous cases. When we know the law of gravitation is as potent on the moon, the planets, and the sun as it is on this earth, and as universal among the comets, the meteors, and the binary stars as in our own system; when the spectroscope discloses the most distant suns and nebulæ are made of a number of the same substances known to compose this globe, a strong degree of probability is given to the argument that the Creator has not made different laws for the same class of facts or objects, but rather a simplicity and unity of governance runs through all creation and states where they may be applicable.

For this reason, it seems to me, the soul which has attained a higher state of morality in this life by the exercise of self-denial and control will, like the body and mind which have respectively developed by labor and thought, be fitted for and will take on a higher spiritual life in the existence of beatified souls.

Further, inasmuch as progression is as a rule the law of this life in matters of conscience and

morality, so it is a probable inference that there will be temptations to be overcome, spiritual tasks to be performed in the future existence, the successful battling with which will evolve nobler souls, greater happiness, and closer approach to Almighty God, and the clearer, deeper understanding of His greatness.

So, as a corollary, there may be in that future life, no less than in this, the slothful, and even disobedient, and who will, surely as God is a just and righteous Judge, suffer the penalties of their misconduct.

The views expressed in this paragraph quite agree with the expressions of the Saviour, "in my Father's house there are many mansions."

HELL

I have been unable to find, any analogy in nature for the existence of a physical Hell, where the corporeal body will be forever burnt by flame and without incineration; or for a Heaven inhabited with angels in glorified corporeal bodies.

A knowledge of nature teaches in the most unequivocal manner that the body of man is composed largely of oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, lime, carbon, potash, etc., and that these substances on cessation of vital functions form new combinations, until finally nothing is left of the once physical body. Of course God could at the last day create a great miracle and actually re-form into its own flesh every body that has ever lived. But I see no analogy in nature for this action. The argument from what we know of natural phenomena is against it. The same atom of oxygen, etc., has in many instances been incorporated into other things. If material bodies were to exist in the future state composed of the elements of nature as now, heat would be required to keep them alive, and heat requires food to supply its loss by radia-

tion, or this probably greatest and most important of all natural states—heat—would have to be altered.

Inasmuch as the moral nature, the soul of man, is something without body or parts; is a capacity to know right from wrong; is a consciousness which experiences pleasure in obeying an instinct to do right, and remorse by instinct, when wrong is done the scientific conclusion would be, if this consciousness exists after death, any punishment it may receive will be similar to what it experiences in this life, namely, an intense and overwhelming regret for joys lost.

This argument is not deemed antagonistic to the allusions in the Bible of physical hell-fires, because such references were most probably written in the exaggerated figurative style of the Psalms of David, and of the early oriental Christian era.

RECOGNITION IN FUTURE LIFE

It seems to follow logically from the foregoing arguments, "if flesh and blood" cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and the body is raised "a spiritual body," the relations of this life, so largely built upon flesh and blood, in order that the earth may be inhabited by beast and man, will probably form no part of immortality.

No argument from nature presents itself to my mind for the immortality of the natural body, but only for the spiritual body—the soul—that instinctive consciousness within us which teaches there is a God whose laws so far as we perceive them should be obeyed. Soul may recognize soul—that is as far as analogy from rational premises, with any probability, leads.

CHRIST

The divinity of Christ has been and is a stumbling block to many persons as anxious to know the truth as the most sincere believers in the Trinity.

I recognize well that no man living has seen Christ, or His miracles, and belief in Him to the extent of the Christian creed must be largely a matter of faith.

For myself, I have been led by a purely rational system of argumentation to accept in the fullest sense the Divinity of Christ. To show the train of reasoning which has brought me to this conclusion, I must repeat, in the first place, the rational argument for faith and its necessity.

We start again with the fundamental proposition that God's Providence is one of progression from the lower to the higher state as exhibited in all the organic domains of nature and this progression is the result of individual efforts, either involuntary or conscious, exerted in overcoming obstacles. Without obstacles to be overcome there can be no effort. This proposition applies to the moral nature of man as well as to his physical and mental qualities.

As I think the subject out, there could be no moral growth in believing in God and worshipping Him if He had made His presence as visible at all times as the sun to men; there could be no increased development in man's morality if there were no temptations and no sin to combat. By analogy to a strictly physical law, in order to exert force there must be a resistance to be contended against, so to exert moral strength there must be something to offer resistance—such as an absence of absolutely definite knowledge of the Being our consciousness instinctively points to as an object to be worshipped, or a natural selfishness opposed by conscience, and which we know it is demanded of us to subdue or regulate within the bounds of charity to our fellow men.

Such a growth in morality shows its desirability by increased happiness in this life, and the probability, as shown in a prior paragraph, for its being a preparation for intenser bliss during a future existence.

I know of nothing so capable of offering a resistance to the conscience, of presenting difficulties to be overcome, like labor is to the muscles, as a state of affairs not apparent to the senses and which cannot be demonstrated as a mathematical proposition. To believe in such a state of affairs, wanting such certainty is faith.

The conclusion, therefore, of this purely rational argument becomes apparent that moral growth would not be acquired by man from the coming of Christ if God were constantly giving to mankind such physical or other evidences of Christ's Messiahship as to leave no opportunity for the exercise of faith. In other words, according to this argument, for God to have accomplished in the best manner the objects of Christ's mission, viz., the growth of man's moral nature, He must have made the evidences of such mission just so far veiled as to call for the practice of faith—for in his efforts to believe, to peer into the mysteries of the Godhead, into the divinity of Christ, to solve these ennobling, unsolvable propositions, and at the same time, while debating the subject, to contemplate as he must the perfection of Christ's life, man grows in such grace as will fit him for entrance into that blissful state of immortality we fain call Heaven.

No argument can, therefore, be drawn from our imperfect knowledge of His Divinity, but such imperfect knowledge is a strong corroborating probability in favor of the truth of such divinity.

In other words, a wise and adequately powerful man who was seeking the moral betterment of mankind would have caused the knowl-

edge of Christ to have been enfolded with just the obscurities we find it.

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When one looks on the face of nature and contemplates the overwhelming evidences of design in everything that exists, even in microscopic germ life; where all these evidences are the result of either individual creation or the outcome of an evolution established by law and impressed upon creatures by an intelligent Creator (the conclusion from the one or the other is the same); where nothing has been allowed to imperil this creation; where higher excellencies in vegetable and animals are being attained century after century; where intellectual and moral growth has been and is taking place, tending to one definite end—the altruism of man—and not to contrary and warring results, as would be the case if it were the work of chance, when one sees all this marshalling of forces, like a well-ordered army under one competent general, for a definite result, and that result is beneficient, the probability is very strong that at all events, as to great masses, as to vast results, no matter how much the individual may apparently be left unaided to work out his des-

tiny, the Creator has a supervision over the affairs of this world.

It is a matter of indifference for the purposes of this argument whether the supervision is immediate in each instance or general, or established by law; in either case an infinitely powerful and loving Creator will hold Himself responsible for the existence of things.

Now of all the events that have happened within historic times none are comparable to the influence exerted by the Mission of Christ. It is believed the historian will agree, the progress of humanity has been greater since the Christian era than for all the eras which preceded it; that the types of manhood have very generally improved, for many more races and parts of races were slaves of others, with attendant ignorance, lust, crime, disregard of life and rights of others, anterior to the proclamation of "peace and good will towards men," than since; that with this reign of peace the scythe and cog wheel have been forged in preference to the spear; that all the comforts and elegancies of the present civilization are due directly to Christ's influence; that a new-born charity for fellow-men has vastly ameliorated all the asperities of life, a charity of which so little was practised among the ancients, and so much now, until nations and individuals vie with one another as to which shall do most for suffering humanity. All of these things an unpreju-

diced and competent judgment must declare to be the result of the coming of Christ.

With such an array of blessings, the product of one event, is the judgment not forced to the conclusion by the strictly rational argument, that no such world-changing power would have been allowed by the Creator to have played, without His permission, such an important part among His creation, which He apparently loves so much?

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The investigator of truth will instantly reply to the conclusion of the preceding section, then the religions of Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet and all pretenders have been allowed by God.

This is probably true. It is a correct deduction from the preceding arguments. God has allowed sin to exist, why not a false religion—possibly a false religion for the same reason he has permitted sin—probably, when He has made known at the same time a true religion. Such was doubtless the case when, notwithstanding the teachings of Moses and the other patriarchs, the Hebrews so often pursued strange gods. Such may be the case when men in the present day reject Christ and set up some other religion, ignoring Him.

There is nothing antagnostic to the idea, God established the Christian religion in that He also permitted Buddhism, Confucianism and Mahometanism and many others. These religions have done good to mankind. Each has taught man higher ideals, higher aspirations and made him a better being.

Possibly each religion has been best suited to the circumstances of the people, or some other adequate reason has caused God to have permitted it.

To my mind, God chose for the advent of Christ a most opportune time—a time when men had advanced to such a state of enlightenment that Christian doctrines have been able to produce the wonderful changes and improvements which have taken place in modern centuries.

The argument in the preceding paragraph is, therefore, not weakened by the conclusion that other religions have been allowed by God. It is unimportant, also, for this argument what He has done in other cases. In His mercy He has brought Christianity to our hearthstones, and the duty follows, from this fact, to accept and practice its precepts and to carry Christ's gospel even to those who are devotees of such other creeds. It is a significant circumstance, however, that in no other religion except Christianity has God permitted the preacher to

claim divinity. Neither Buddha, Confucius, nor Mahomet asserted he was more than man.

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A legitimate method of human reasoning is, one may judge men and things by results. So when we find a religion unfolding most beautifully the love and holiness and righteousness of God, teaching brotherly love and truth, the results of which have been a wonderful progress in the physical, intellectual, and moral development of men wherever such religion has been established, it raises a probability of its truthfulness and the veracity of its founder, for truth and error do not consort—grapes do not grow of thistles or figs of thorns.

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Not only are the results of men's conduct a valuable criterion for testing the validity of their claims for recognition, but the means they employ to produce results also furnish credit or discredit to the truthfulness of their assertions.

To steal in order to give to the poor; to lie for a good cause; to break the Sabbath day unnecessarily to earn money for the necessities of life; to claim the gift of prophecy for gain, all bear their own condemnations. But when we find a preacher leading the most exemplary life, devoting his energies without hope of reward, whose teachings breathe the highest philanthropy, who gives his life, as a martyr, for his principles, such methods constitute a probability that what he claims for himself is true, because he has been truthful in all other things.

At law a man's general reputation for truth is considered adequate to constitute a sufficiently strong reason why he may be believed in any particular instance. On what ground, then, can Christ be deprived of the benefit of this presumption which men apply in cases of human conduct?

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Many persons profess to believe Jesus Christ was a reality—a man of the highest possible virtues, but not the Son of God. His life they point to as an example for all men to admire and imitate. They further agree, nothing has so contributed to bring about the benign results

of civilization of the present era as the influence of His religion.

These two positions are to my mind inconsistent. For no proposition is plainer than Christ in several places in the New Testament distinctly declares His Divinity—that He is the Son of God.

If Christ was truthful, as they affirm, He should be believed; if He was not divine, not the Son of God, He must have been a falsifier, but such persons say He possessed every virtue, and was not a falsifier, therefore their positions are inconsistent.

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The argument that Jesus Christ was the best of men and still not the Son of God may be attempted to be defended as follows: Its advocates may say, we believe Jesus lived, that He was pre-eminently virtuous, truthful, and the most perfect man who has existed, but we deny He made the assertions of Himself recorded in the New Testament. We contend that the things therein affirmed concerning His Divinity have been written by men who have lived since and whose assertions are unworthy of belief. This dictum is founded on no proof except

what such persons claim is the natural improbability of God sending a Son, a part of His own Divine Being, to this earth as a teacher and as a sacrifice for man.

The Christians may answer, "We deny there is any improbability in God visiting this earth in the form of Christ. You anti-Christians admit God made the world which has so much beauty and love and happiness in it, that it has been the subject of His watchful care, and man has been the favored object of His creation, why, then, is there any improbability in God having visited in person this earth to direct and prepare mankind for the advanced civilization He at that time intended to inaugurate as the Christian Era? If He came to this earth, the probability is, He would have appeared as a corporeal being, for man with his five senses could recognize no other, limited as he is to a cognizance of matter, and therefore God would probably choose to represent Himself in the form of man so as to approach nearer to the minds and consciences of men."

It thus is manifest, there is no inherent improbability of God having appeared among men in the person of Jesus Christ.

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Admit the authenticity of the Scriptures, that is, their words were inspired by God, then there is no escape from the acceptance of all therein written as truthful.

But indeed it is fast growing to be the fashion among men, particularly as distinguished from women, to deny their authenticity. Not that one person in ten can give an intelligent reason for his unbelief, but an impression or a knowledge that some distinguished atheists have held this view is adequate on which to establish their uneducated conviction.

But what are the probabilities of their genuineness in a purely rational argumentation. Upon their face, from cover to cover of the New Testament, nothing save the highest morality is set forth—truth, justice, charity, purity, benevolent self-sacrifice, temperance—every conceivable virtue is taught, and nowhere is crime, deceit or other sin authorized or palliated.

For men unaided by inspiration to have written so much that is superlatively good, to have never shown the cloven foot of the beast even once, it is improbable (from our common knowledge that men speak and act and write from the fullness of the heart) that such individuals, imbued with such elevated morality, could have deliberately fabricated and recorded what they knew to be false—more yet,

to have falsified when the falsification could not have been of any possible profit to themselves.

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To my mind the New Testament account of the life of Christ—His principles of morality, His teachings, His exposition of His Divinity and mission, His death and resurrection—is the most extraordinary statement or scheme of facts that has ever appeared in the annals of mankind. Nothing written before or since bears any comparison to it, either in the facts recorded or the manner in which they are narrated. The history of Buddha, Confucius, or Mahomet, in every essential point, is vastly inferior.

It is so unique, for centuries the most talented of mankind have produced nothing like it; so captivating, the most learned and earnest have become enrapt in its recitals and principles.

When any scheme of such transcendent originality, such marvellous morality, and such persuasive probability takes a firm hold on the minds of the best thinkers for centuries, there is, as a matter of purely human reasoning, a

probability of its truthfulness, for the consensus of a large number of competent judges has always been deemed in human affairs the best means for arriving at truth.

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The principles taught by Christ raise a probability of the genuineness of His own Divinity. With a wonderfully accurate generalization He groups all of mankind's duties under two heads—First, To love God with all the heart and soul and mind; and second, To love one's neighbor as one's self.

The perfect obedience of these two laws is the ultimate goal to which all moral improvement is tending. In the long vista of the future, seen clearly only by the eye of Divinity, Christ, understanding the principles of God's creation, that excelsior was the ruling thought of the Creator and destiny of all things, announced with more than human wisdom these grand requirements to constitute the highest and future man.

No being of flesh and blood alone would have conceived of the sublimity of character to be attained in a perfect obedience to such commandments, or would have deemed it practicable to have set such a task for mankind to

perform. Buddha and Confucius failed to recognize man's obligation to the Deity; and Mahomet, man's duty to man.

We thus have in the ten arguments presented above ten probabilities in favor of the verity of Christ and the truthfulness of the religion He expounded.

In a matter of worldly concern when ten probabilities point to one conclusion and none—except the inability of certain demonstration, and that in a matter where certain demonstration is impossible and not desirable—is shown to exist against it, a wise man usually, with much certainty, acts upon them.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Men are social beings. In co-operation they attain their highest development. Argument is not necessary to establish this proposition.

To live in society certain rules for government of the individuals are so necessary that in every instance, whether nomadic, tribal, or in more complex organizations, such rules are established either involuntarily or by design. Co-operation, by its very nature, implies agreement of conduct to produce certain desired results. This compact to act on definite lines is government, and men cannot escape from its establishment if they would.

The same principle producing national government applies in all cases where individuals act in common—from world-wide corporations to a partnership of two persons.

Christ established a religion, the aim of which was the betterment of mankind. To promulgate it required the efforts of many disciples. Their work was to have a common object, therefore an organization with definite rules for government of the members was necessary. Such an organization is a church.

A church being thus proved from strictly rational considerations to be necessary, no man has a right to divorce himself from such an organization, and say, "I will serve God alone."

The wisdom of church establishment is as apparent as its necessity. Men have a right to the example and counsel of their neighbors; and besides nothing contributes more to stability of conduct in doing well than the restraining influence of the opinion of one's fellow churchmen.

MIRACLES

The historian Hume asserted no human testimony was competent to prove the truth of a miracle when such miracle was a violation of the ordinary laws of nature.

To a man who has succeeded in convincing himself there is no God, the truth of miracles cannot be demonstrated. God alone, it is admitted, can change the laws of nature, and if He does not exist, there is no power to perform them. Nothing illustrates better the inconsistent credulity of the atheist than his ascribing to inorganic matter the power to originate itself and establish the inconceivably complex, but certain, laws by which it is governed.

To hold the opinion that the laws of gravitation established themselves, the principal theorem of which is, matter attracts matter directly as the masses and inversely as the square of the distances between them; that light and heat, mere vibrations, without intelligence, could construct their own laws, could work out even the one rule that their diffusion is as the cube of the distance; that matter could distinguish between its attractive force which is directly as the mass and its working force

which is impeded as the third power of its weight; that electricity, believed by many to be a pure vibration of molecules, without mentality, could arrange its transmission so its electromotive force would always be equal to the current multiplied by the resistance—more yet, every time any one of these forces exerts itself, it has the intelligence to act in the same manner, it has invariably behaved in the aeons of the past—I say, to hold these opinions of nature, of inanimate matter, to endow it with such wonderful intelligence and order, is more inconceivable than to believe an all-powerful and all-wise Creator would perform a miracle to attest the truth of a religion which had for its object the elevation of man, the highest earthly product of His creation.

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Assuming the universe was brought into existence by a Creator, it is an ordinary probability that He has the power to perform miracles if He desires.

What men make they can unmake or alter. If this be the rule of this life, is it not probable the Creator of the world and its laws can destroy the world and suspend or change those

laws? Would it not be a violation of the ordinary principles of reasoning we apply to earthly affairs to suppose a God who had the capacity to make the wonderful cosmos of land and sea and skies was Himself a slave to His own creation, without the power to abolish, to alter, or even to improve it?

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If it be granted this world was made by an all-powerful and intelligent Creator, whose scheme of creation included the moral betterment of mankind, then nothing is more reasonable, or probable, than He should appeal to that moral nature in a manner best suited to its ennoblement.

That God has done so is plain from His causing unhappiness invariably to attend on disobedience of the instinctive moral laws and contentment to follow the performance of moral duty.

When we find Him, therefore, taking such an active part in the moral behavior of men, is it improbable He should go a step further and establish a new religion, the natural effect of which has been a great aid to such moral life?

If this be true, does it not follow logically, would not any wise man, having the power, certify in the beginning his religion by such unusual evidences as miracles, so as to leave no doubt in the minds of many of those who saw them, and were to attest them to future generations, of the genuineness of such religion?

Would not this wise man go a step further, namely, after the certification of his religon by miracles, cease in their unnecessary reiteration in order to allow faith—the ennobling influences of faith—in those miracles to operate continuously by attracting attention to them, and their evidences; by causing an effort at belief, and as a consequence of such effort for men to grow into higher spirituality?

There would be no increase in spirituality if at stated periods in every year God attested His Divinity by an undoubtable miracle. Men would receive it as they do the knowledge that three and two make five. In the case of belief in the numbers making five there can be no advancement, and as often repeated heretofore there can be no physical growth without labor, and no moral growth in believing in God and His Son if their demonstration were absolute.

The uncertainties of the miracles of Christ are in exact accord with all the phases of God's revelation of Himself to us. No man has seen His Holy Essence. They are in harmony with

His entire plan of the evolution of life, for all life ascends to higher planes only by effort.

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God in establishing the religion of Christ was dealing with a race of beings which received all its primary knowledge through the five senses. These senses took cognizance only of matter and of the unvarying character of the laws governing it. Plainly, the most effective manner, from a human point of view, to appeal to the intelligence of such creatures, to show them that such religion came from God and God alone, was to reverse or suspend the laws of nature the race knew He alone could do.

The fact, therefore, that the most appropriate means were used to produce the most effective results, of itself, creates a probability of the reality of the miracles of Christ.

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Inasmuch as miracles involve a temporary reversal or suspension of the laws of nature, which can be accomplished only by an all-pow-

erful Being, it is manifest no man, as man, can perform a miracle.

When, therefore, miracles are asserted by individuals to attest things our consciousness declare are not of God, such accounts should be rejected. But on the other hand, as the character of the miracles of the Saviour was benign, was ennobling; the cause for the miracles was adequate; the effects produced by the miracles have been of the most extraordinary beneficence; the miracles were attested by such numbers of competent judges and truthful persons as to exclude in all human probability any mistake or fabrication, then such miracles are as proper subjects of belief as many of the things believed by men in the ordinary affairs of life.